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Recruiters Have Visited 100

CIA Looks to Colleges

Special to The Journal-Bulletin

Washington. — Accredited courses in espionage are not offered at any of the 3,016 colleges and universities in the United States.

Yet the Central Intelligence Agency, the supersecret organization in suburban McLean, Va., sends recruiters to some 100 of them.

The avowed intention: To find scholars, not spies. They are looking for people who can make sense out of secrets.

They are trying to hire new members for a kind of secret advanced study institute on the Potomac, where spies tell it to scholars, who, tell it to the President.

What they want is people who know anything and everything from anthropology to zoology.

"We're after good people," Col. Stanley Grogan, agency spokesman, has said.

But the CIA's own recruiters said a few things more to college seniors across America this spring.

"Wants Experts"

A Princeton senior told a newsman that "they're after the campus intellectuals."

"The CIA wants experts," said the director of Boston University's placement office.

CIA recruiters have their handicaps—perhaps a few more than the average. Making students swear not to divulge what goes on in the interview tends to hamper word-of-mouth advertising.

Politically activist students picketed the recruiters last winter at Grinnell College in Iowa. Agency recruiters have been picketed before, elsewhere.

But despite its lack of fanfare, and despite occasional ostracism, CIA is, on the whole, a popular recruiter.

A fine-print notice in the Harvard Crimson, buried in a long column of similar notices of the coming of various other recruiters, drew 22 Harvard students last spring.

At the University of Texas, said a placement official there, the CIA recruiter "never has any trouble finding people."

"Far Places"

Last spring at the University of Colorado, 82 students showed up for interviews.

The CIA actually has a recruiting brochure, which suggests to prospective employees that some will get to serve their country in "far places." Yet this hint of romance and adventure is not what attracts most of the people.

A veteran placement officer put it this way:

"Any time you have an employer who can use so many different kinds of people, the turnout is bound to be large. Most corporations and government agencies hire people who have a specific major."

The subjects are few that fail to interest the CIA. When CIA recruiters visited the University of Colorado, for example, this is who they wanted to see:

"People with any degree in electrical engineering, engineering physics, applied mathematics, physics, modern languages, (especially Slavic or Oriental), economics, history, international affairs, and geography."

Must Be Citizens

They also wanted to interview law students, and graduate students in business administration, aeronautical engineering, mechanical engineering and chemistry. (All must be American citizens, of course.)

Lists on other campuses have been similar, with occasional additions or deletions.

To many people reading a list like this, it might appear that the agency was taking the long-winded way of saying it would take anybody, regardless of what he studied, so long as he is a good security risk.

But while the loyal and true part is important, the grab-bag impression is not accurate. The agency, however, does claim to have tailor-made jobs for people in each of these fields.

An electrical engineering major at Tulane was told that he could be set to work helping the government develop listening devices. Or he might be called on to inspect foreign nations' plans for such devices and other apparatus.

Writing Biographies

A girl in the Boston area, inclined toward political science, was told in an interview that she could be put to work writing biographies of all the important officials of some single significant foreign country. When agency officials were about to leave for overseas, she would tell them who was who.

To a scholar who wants something different, someone who wants a job, money, vacations, sick leave, regular hours, the CIA may hold a certain attraction.

But for the true scholar, a major drawback is the question of publication. Publication is the lifeblood of scholarship and the way to prestige and reputation.

At Harvard, a recruiter candidly admitted to a student he was interviewing that it can be frustrating to work for an agency that will not let your friends and colleagues in the scholarly world see and read what you have done.

"Called, Digest, Collate"

One recruiting brochure says: "It's the agency's role to collect, digest, collate and interpret the information which the President of the United States must have."

Another CIA recruiting lure is the chance to see the world.

As a Tulane senior described the interview, "The overseas trip was his big drawing card, and he flashed it often."

But when agency recruiters talk of the chance to carry out a career full of "excitement," there is a strong likelihood that their hearers do not believe they are talking of long afternoons in libraries.

"Field Work"

The recruiter who visited Harvard alluded to "field work" and undefined activity which could be engaged in only after an apprenticeship spent in Washington.

In general, agency recruiters, while they do take care to drop the proper hints, are decidedly softsell, and do not do much arm-twisting.

The recruiter at Yale did not go much beyond the fact that he himself "likes" the CIA.

Students at Princeton found the recruiter surprisingly genial and soft-spoken.

But some CIA recruiters may react quickly when someone mentions the Bay of Pigs, or some of the recent popular books on the agency.

The recruiter at Pomona advised students to find out about the CIA by reading Allen Dulles' books and not those of "irresponsible, self-seeking journalists."

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